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She's Been a Campus Personality In Her Brief and Busy History

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THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

"A Magazine for Homemakers From a Homemaker's School"

Published monthly during the school year by the home economics students of Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa. Price \$1.00 per year. Advertising rates on application. Entered as second-class matter at the postoffice, Ames, Iowa

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She's Been a Campus Personality In Her Brief and Busy History by Prof. Blair Converse

NOT exactly an old lady—although her life has been a full one. She's had a divorce; she's known poverty, struggles and hardships. Enough to wizen the face and bring gray hairs. But she isn't old—not in years and not in spirit.

To prove that, I can say that I have known her all her life.

She lived, this lady, this Iowa Homemaker, during her married days, in the southeast corner of the first floor of Agricultural Hall. Her Goodman was the Iowa Agriculturist. They inhabited their one-room apartment in Ag Hall and they had their spats and squabbles as well as their brief moments of happiness. They sallied forth once a month and were known to the world under the husband's name, as was fitting and proper.

But the lady got ideas as to women's rights, her place in the sun. The old home wouldn't hold her.

On a spring day in 1921 she went to court and got a divorce. She alleged cruelty and asked for her maiden name.

THE AUTHOR

Prof. Blair Converse has been a member of the Homemaker Board since 1927 and he was a member of the Journalism Department when the Homemaker was first established.

Who could be better prepared to tell the history of this magazine than he? He has been well acquainted with its trials and successes, its struggle for improvement and its occasional lapses and setbacks. This is his portrait of the Homemaker, "as she is."

She appeared on the campus as Miss Iowa Homemaker and she's made her way in the world ever since. On the whole she's been happy, a good citizen and a helpful force in her community—although to be perfectly frank there have been dark days when she has had to worry a little about where the next day's food was coming from.

PERHAPS I should write her biography with a little less emotion, a little less of the feeling of an older brother who knows her only too well, loves her in spite of everything—something in the encyclopedic style, like this:

"Before 1921, home economics girls interested in journalism conducted a department called the Home Economics Department in the Iowa Agriculturist. In April, 1921, Volume 1, No. 1 of The Iowa Homemaker was issued. It was printed in the old Ames Tribune plant downtown. It had 16 pages and cover and a little more than enough advertising to pay for itself."

Something like that. But the trouble is that that bleak sort of narrative gives no inkling of the long, long hours of planning, discussion, writing, editing, advertising soliciting that went into the making of the first and only college home economics magazine.

THE Agriculturist and the Engineer, because they belonged to associations of similar magazines in other colleges, could sell advertising space to national advertisers. Not so the Homemaker. She was a gay divorcee, but she hadn't a cent of alimony. She had to make her own way by the sweat of her brow.

At various times she tried many expedients. For a while she became the ally of the State Home Economics Association—the official organ of that body, in fact, and got thereby a certain number of subscriptions—at a reduced price.

Again she wooed the 4-H girls of the state and tried, with a special department for them, to draw them into the circle of her readers. But they were coy and not many of them had the 50 cents.

Her most ambitious undertaking was the making and publishing, with the help of the foods staff of the Home Economics Division, of a beautiful Homemaker Cookbook. Five thousand copies were printed. For several years one of her biggest jobs was to devise ways of disposing of cookbooks.

And those cookbooks were a godsend, for in the thirties she began to feel the pinch of depression. It was so severe that for several years she couldn't make both ends meet. But the profits from the cookbook and timely aid from the Home Economics Club kept the lady from the poorhouse. That and a series of fine staffs which fought and bled for every possible subscription and every possible inch of advertising.

The poorhouse was skipped, although the poor girl had a long look over the fence. She hasn't ever been affluent and she isn't now. But in the last few years she has been able to put aside a nest egg—lent to Miss Roberts for the student loan fund.

Her ambitions do not run toward wealth. Of course she likes to have sufficient income to dress in style and to be able to pay her bills when they come due. But rather she's interested in being as gay as possible, as intelligent, as loyal and as friendly. She likes particularly the fall of the year, when so many new girls come to the campus. She'd like to welcome them all and make them feel that they belong to the campus and the college where she has spent her life and where she plans to go on spending it for a good many years to come.

She simply won't confess that she's old—and she isn't.